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ABSTRACT

This book describes how talk is used to build social organization within face-to-face interaction among a group of urban black children, an analysis providing the opportunity to study language, culture, and social organization from an integrated perspective. Children from a southwest Philadelphia neighborhood were tape-recorded during peer-group interactions for 16 months during 1970-1971. Their families were members of the working class and had helped to create an environment of security for their children by keeping gangs off their street. The children spoke Black English vernacular and they preferred to play outside with friends rather than inside with toys. Boys established differences among themselves while performing a task, a social organization that permeated other aspects of their peer activities. Girls, on the other hand, organized themselves in ways that reflected equality rather than differentiation and emphasized cooperation during task activities. Directives were examined in boys' and girls' task activities and in girls' pretend play as actions embedded within a larger field of social activity. The book also investigates how the children used argumentative talk to build their social world and how they used stories to restructure the social organization of the talk of the moment and to initiate larger social events. The appendixes include a list of the children who participated and examples of a ritual insult sequence, boys' dispute stories, and girls' instigating stories. The reference list contains 584 items. (CJS)

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